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AMARANTH AND ASPHODEL



ALFRED T. BUTLER

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AMARANTH AND ASPHODEL:

SONGS FROM THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

BY

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1881.

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DEDICATED,
BY PERMISSION,
TO
HIS HIGHNESS THE KHEDIVE OF EGYPT.

2222613



PREFACE.

THE revival of Hellenism in England will, I think, be of some service to the cause of scholarship, as it is likely to encourage the only type of it which has much chance of living on in a modern atmosphere. The pedantic style of scholarship must give way to the artistic: the love of form and colour in language must replace the craze for analysis. Already the truism that the study of Greek art and archæology ought to form part of a classical training is being welcomed—though shyly, as a new revelation—at schools and universities. Union with art will give to scholarship those bolder aims and higher purposes which alone can save it from decay. For in the end scholarship does not mean raking among the dust of a dead language for relics of roots or atoms of grammar; it is rather the study of living beauty in shapes

of speech, and its highest result is not the knowledge of tenses and particles, but the power of understanding and loving what is beautiful in the writings of great writers and in the world of nature. Every artist would be better for being first a scholar: I believe a right study of the language in connection with the art of Hellas is the best training an artist could have; that nothing else can, in the same way, refine the sense of form and colour and develop artistic power. Quite a contrary result must come from the old style of scholarship, which would grope among the cobwebs instead of admiring the architecture, or would pound the gems in a mortar in order to analyse their powder. As the artist is a student of beautiful forms in nature, so the scholar is a student of beautiful forms in language: and as no art can be permanent that lacks ideal meaning, so conversely no language can be permanent that lacks artistic interest. It is no mere chance coincidence that Greek art and the Greek language each attained an excellence unrivalled in human history. The beauty of a statue, a coin, or a flower is the same thing as the beauty of a phrase or sentence: it requires the same taste to feel pleasure in the lines of a sea-shell, or a fir-cone, as to

enjoy the mould of a fine sonnet or the build of a great poem. But in art and in literature alike one desires to go back beyond the mere results, however fully their worth and significance be understood. The deeper we see into the spirit of the work, the more we wish to know the spirit of the artist or writer, to know how the mind of the maker was made, the stars that met at his birth, the ways of thought and feeling and action of the world in which he moved.

The Anthology, from which the poems in this volume are borrowed, may fairly claim the double interest of possessing at once paramount artistic and antiquarian value. There is no book like it for the student of Greek art or language who wishes to understand the motives and conditions of Greek life. Yet it is little known or read even among scholars. In publishing these verses, I venture to hope that more of those who can read Greek will turn to the perusal of the original, and some of those who cannot may find pleasure in the copies. If the coins are out of reach, some interest may attach even to electrotypes.

The first collections—the “Stephanos” of Meleager, B.C. 60, and the “Anthologia” of Philippus 150 years later, are lost: Cephalas

in the tenth century and Planudes, a monk of Byzantium, in the fourteenth, from whose works the existing Anthology is compiled, professed to arrange by subject. The principle seems right, in default of any known chronological order; but their arrangement is so loose, so full of cross-division, that I have not scrupled to depart from it, and lay down the main lines afresh. Once, however, these main lines were fixed, it has not always been possible or desirable to plan out the details very minutely. The Love-songs, after the first, follow roughly an order of thought from doubt to possession, possession to loss or satiety: the Songs of Death fall into two groups—historical and domestic: but beyond this there is more caprice than design in the way the poems are sorted. The fact is, many of them are so essentially independent, that it would be a blunder of taste to force them into any special order. Thus the Songs of Nature are put together without much system: between the pretty sonnet of Meleager at the beginning, and the magnificent ode of Ptolemy at the end, come random little songs about bees, cicadas, and birds. All, however, show how tender and childlike, yet real and deep, was the Greek love of nature—a fact I cannot

imagine any one doubting who has understood six epithets in Homer, or seen a coin of Rhodos or Metapontum. The last title, "Songs of Hereafter," is perhaps not very accurate; indeed, it might almost be changed to "Songs of No Hereafter:" but I have chosen it because the writers of these songs seem always as if their eyes were fixed on the hereafter, even though they saw only eternal darkness. The scantiness of the mythology throughout is curious as showing how little real hold the vulgar ideas of a future state had on the mind of the people.

In such a miscellaneous collection, gathered in many places, and reaching from the earliest times to the end of the Alexandrine period, it would be idle to look for unity of style or equality of merit. The charm of each poem varies with the mood and powers of the writer. Songs of love and wine, of hope and fear, of cross and triumph; hymns of delight in art and nature and life; dirges of sorrow for loss and death; odes of melancholy at the utter vanity of all things; praises of virtue and vice; and cries from the heart's hopelessness of any sure hereafter—these are all found in the Anthology. It is only the most beautiful of the poems, the most remarkable for passion or

pathos, that I have rendered in English. Sometimes it happens that one lights upon a golden thought or image embedded in impurities: when thus forced to choose between abandoning the poem, and so losing the fine thought, or removing the coarseness, and so far departing from the original, I have preferred to be unfaithful. But such cases are rare. That some of the poems as they stand have a certain freedom, I do not deny; but I think it is the innocent freedom of mere naturalness, which is vicious only to the vicious-minded. As a rule, it will be found that the renderings are literal and the order unchanged; all stanzas of ten-syllable lines alternately rhyming—and these are far the greatest majority of the whole—correspond line for line with the Greek.

Where the mood of the original has seemed to require a lyric metre, I have still always preserved a fixed proportion: if, for example, an elegiac poem is turned into rhyming triplets, each couplet of the Greek answers to a triplet in the English. This law of quantitative correspondence is one which translators, from Pope downwards, have treated too cavalierly: to me it seems essential. The model may be copied no doubt on a larger or smaller scale as the

materials require ; but what would be thought of a sculptor who in copying an antique figure enlarged the scale of the head, preserved the scale of the foot, and diminished the scale of the body ? A poem, too, has its own statuesque completeness.

To the writer, perhaps, more than to the reader, it is a matter of some interest that, as much of the original, so more than half this volume was written in Egypt. Almost every town known in Greek story from Syene in the far south to Bubastis, Naucratis, and Alexandria in the Delta, has contributed one or more of these English poems. After two thousand years to render a Greek song about the Nile while sailing down the same river, a song about Memphis or the Pyramids in sight of their ruins and remains, a song about the great lighthouse at Alexandria while living on the very island of Pharos where it stood, is perhaps a pleasure every one will not appreciate. But beyond this "sentimental" interest, life in the East has had its uses in giving fresh insight into some phases of Greek thought or habit. Of the splendour of the Greek empire in Egypt no token now remains but here and there a silver coin or an earthen lamp, a marble shaft used as a door-

step for the feet of an Arab, a slab for his bath, or a pillar for his mosque : still, to live in places hallowed by Greek traditions, and in an atmosphere brighter than that of Athens, is in itself to receive some touch of the Greek spirit ; and, what is more important, one finds much in Eastern life that belonged also to Greek life, —customs and ideas older than the very name of Hellas, and lasting with little change since they were received by the Hellenes. One realizes, in fact, the Oriental side of Greek manners. So if I have been able at all to render the spirit of my original into English, I owe something to the sunshine and the conservatism of Egypt.

ALEXANDRIA, *July*, 1880.

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REFERENCES.

Erot.	=	Ἑρωτικά.
Epit.	=	Ἐπιτύμβια.
Epid.	=	Ἐπιδεικτικά.
M. P.	=	Μοῦσα Παιδική.
Protrep.	=	Προτρεπτικά.

The numbers are those given in the Tauchnitz edition of the Anthology.

I.

SONGS OF THE LOVE OF
WOMEN.



THE END.

TEARS for a gift I bring thee in the dust,
The remnant of desire come unto doom,
And sorrow's tears in sorrow on thy tomb
Pour for remembrance of thy love and trust.
With bitter, bitter wailing, as I must,
I give thee barren greeting in the gloom.
Ah me ! my lovely flower that brake in bloom
Is stolen by death, and in the mould is thrust.
O Earth, great mother, at my tears' behest,
Close in thy clasp and fold her gently to thy breast !
(Ep. 476.)

TRUE PASSION.

It is not love to love a lovely face,
And take a shrewd eye's measure of desire :
Love is to love where beauty hath no place,
To feel the kindling madness break in fire.
This, this is burning passion : taste bestows
On all alike the love of. comely shows.
(89 Erot.)

A WARNING.

I PLAYED with her, and found about her waist
A girdle of fair flowers most fairly traced,
And writ with golden letters all above,—
“Love me, and let another have my love.”

(158 Erot.)

COMING EVENTS.

1.

Nor yet the bud has ripened to the rose,
Nor with the purple bloom, that summer throws,
The cluster of thy maiden graces glows.

2.

Yet even now the young desires, I ween,
Upon the whetstone make their arrows keen,
And in thy heart there rolls a flame unseen.

3.

Away, then, luckless lovers ! let us flee,
Ere from the string the feathered shaft be free.
I am the seer of mighty fires to be !

(124 Erot.)

LOVE AND DOUBT.

My love is like a storm in spring, meseems,
When dim the signs upon the sea arise :
Now showers of rain fall, now fair weather gleams,
Now lovely laughter breaking from thine eyes.
Shipwrecked, 'mid blinding billows of the night
I toss and plunge 'mid clouds of flying foam :
O show me love or hate for beacon-light,
That I may know what are the waves I roam !
(156 M. P.)

A WOMAN'S FEARS.

SWEET is the smile of Lais, sweet the rain
Of teardrops from her gently twinkling eyes.
Last eve her head had longtime sweetly lain
Against me, when she fell to sudden sighs.
I kissed her sorrow : but tear after tear
Fell down our meeting lips like showers of dew.
"What ails thee, maiden?" "Ah!" she cried, "I
fear
"Thou wilt forsake me : men's troth is not true."
(250 Erot.)

LOVE AND WORK.

Woe for the loveless lives ! for passion-free

In word and work a man doth feeble things.

Mine is a sluggard soul ; yet kenning thee,

Quicker than lightning forth I speed on wings.

So follow sweet desire, nor turn to flee :—

“Love gives the soul her edge,” the wise man sings.

(18 M. P.)

LOST.

Look down, O golden moon, and starry fires,

Whom Ocean clasps caressing to her breast !

My sweet love leaves me lorn with fierce desires :

Eight days I seek my fairy east and west,

Yet still must search, and send, ere searching tires,

The silver hounds of Cypris on the quest.

(16 Erot.)

LOVE AND LIFE.

ON thee the cords that hold my life are laid,
On thee, my utmost breath of being stayed.
By thy bright face and eyes which speak so clear,
That men may understand who cannot hear,
One cloud upon thy brow doth winter bring,
One sunny glance again makes sweetest spring.

(159 M. P.)

DARE.

SHALL we forever stealing looks of fire
Fling covert glances thus with bated breath?
Nay, tell aloud our loves ; and if we fail
Of those soft claspings, where pain vanisheth,
The sword shall bring deliverance. Better far
One lot together, be it life or death.

(221 Erot.)

SECRET LOVE.

How long these stolen kisses, signs, and play
Of starveling glances, when no watcher heeds?
How long these fruitless whispers, and delay
Yoked with delay, while love but idly speeds?
We linger, and we waste the bloom away :
Ere youth is gone, then, crown our words with
deeds.

(21 M. P.)

DANGER.

WHEN in the morn I lean upon her breast,
At morn, or when the sun sinks in the west,
I know I walk o'er gulfs that yawn below,
I stake my life upon one single throw.
So be it : wheresoever love may steer,
The brave man moves without one dream of fear.

(25 Erot.)

THE SWALLOWS.

I.

I WAIL through all the watches of the night ;
And when the morning comes with brief delight,
The swallows chirp around me in despite.

2.

I weep : for they despoil me of my rest :
Tears hold my eyes awakened, and my breast
Is filled with thoughts of her my heart loves best.

3.

Ah, spiteful chatterers ! cease your evil spell.
I did not cleave the tongue of Philomel.
Go, mourn for Itys in some mountain dell,

4.

Or in some rocky glen the king-bird charms,
That I may sleep awhile without alarms,
And dream my true love winds me in her arms.

(237 Erot.)

RELENT.

WHY so coy and unforgiving?
None shall love thee in the tomb.
Love's delight is with the living,
Dust and ashes after doom.
(85 Erot.)

FLOWERS.

1.

HANG there, above her chamber door, fair flowers
Drenched with my tears—Love's eyes are full of
showers,—
Yet shake ye not your leaves at random hours.

2.

Wait while she lifts the latchet and outpeers,
Then rain ye drops of sorrow, as she nears,
And make her golden tresses drink my tears.
(145 Erot.)

A PROUD BEAUTY.

HIGH in the pride of beauty, scarce she deigns
With haughty mien to own my greeting given :
The wreath I hang above her door with pains
In scorn beneath her haughty feet is riven.
Come then, with furrowed cheek, remorseless Eld,
Hasten, and let her pride by thee be quelled.
(92 Erot.)

A WISH.

WHEN around thee the sunbeams are shaken,
And thou barest thy breast,
Would I were the wind to be taken
To breathe there at rest !
(83 Erot.)

A WISH.

O WERE I only a rose
By thy hand caressed,
My red leaves laid in repose
On the snow of thy breast !
(84 Erot.)

A WREATH.

I SEND a wreath of comely flowers to thee
That mine own fingers did together twine :
Lily and rosebud and anemone,
Fresh daffodils and dewy eglantine.
Crown thee :—but end thy proud disdain of me :
Flowers have their time to fade, and thou hast
thine.

(74 Erot.)

AN OFFERING.

1.

SWEET-BREATHING lady, from thy scented bowers,
Though tenfold incense wrap thy sleeping hours,
Awake, and take with kindly hand my flowers.

2.

My wreath, that blossoms now at eventide,
Shall wither ere the morning watch is cried,
Fit emblem of thy youth and beauty's pride !

(118 Erot.)

LOVE AND ENVY.

I SAW two lovers in mad passion strive :
In one long kiss their lips together clung ;
Nor could they take their fill, but closer flung,
Each fain within the other's soul to dive.

Their holden speech found sweet reliefs at need,
While each the other's raiment did enfold,—
He like Achilles, when he passed of old
For maiden, in the halls of Lycomede ;

She, draped and looped her snowy knee above,
Stood like a marble-moulded Artemis ;
And still their lips fixed straining in a kiss
For hunger of their quenchless fainting love.

Sooner two writhed and twisted vines unweave
Their tight growth tangled with the grip of years,
Than aught shall sunder these two loving feres,
Or loose their lacing arms that twine and cleave.

Thrice happy they, inwoven heart to heart,
While thou and I, my love, are burning far apart !

(255 Erot.)

LOVE UNIVERSAL.

MINE eyes view all the world,
Beholding thee :
Without thee, view the world
And cannot see.

(60 M. P.)

AT NIGHT.

THINE eyes are fixed upon the starry skies,
Thou star of mine !
Would I were heaven with multitudinous eyes
To gaze on thine !

(669 Epit.)

IN THE HEART.

Love's own handiwork hath moulded
Lady Sunbeam in my heart,
Soul within my soul enfolded
By the cunning of Love's art.

(155 Erot.)

A FAIR WOMAN.

A FACE like crystal, eyes like gold aglow,
Lips sweeter than the red rose on the tree,
A neck of marble, breasts of shining snow,
And fair feet whiter than the silver sea :
Twined in her hair the richest blooms that grow
Gleam without guerdon of a glance from me.
(48 Erot.)

BEAUTY UNADORNED.

No need upon the rose-tree flowers to bind
Nor robes on thee, nor jewelled tire, my queen.
Thy limbs are shining pearl, and gold refined
Cannot adorn thy waving tresses' sheen.
Thou hast the magic girdle—lips of dew,
And winning ways of honeyed harmony.
I faint : with charms like these I cannot cope,
Save for thy cheering smile, where bideth kindly
hope.

(270 Erot.)

A DIVIDED MIND.

My heart forewarns me to forsake the quest,
Knowing the olden tears and ruined rest.
Forsake the quest I cannot : love returns :
My heart forewarns, but warns me false—and burns.
(24 Erot.)

A WOMAN'S HAIR.

WHETHER with sable sheen thy hair
Flash darkly, or glow golden-fair,
Amid such splendour love, I know,
Shall linger when all turns to snow.
(26 Erot.)

A SECRET.

O FOR those rosy musical lips of thine,
Bewitching doorway of that mouth divine !
The shadowy lashes of thy lightning eyes,
Where snared and meshed my heart a captive lies !
—Yet why show curs the quarry? Midas' reeds
Show how a tongue without a fastening speeds.
(56 Erot.)

LOVE AND MUSIC.

I.

SWEET is thy song, by Pan of Arcady !
Sweet is the song thou singest unto me,
Sweet are the tones thou strikest from thy lyre.

2.

O whither shall I flee? on every side
Compass'd by countless passions I abide,
And find no breath of rest to my desire.

3.

Love from thy beauty, or thy song, doth fall,
Or from thy sweetness—nay, from all in all :
Thy love doth smite me and I burn with fire.
(139 Erot.)

MY ROSE.

1.

SWEET silver snowdrops bloom, and daffodils
Bloom as the rain befriends their dewy frills;
Sweet bloom the wandering lilies of the hills.

2.

Nay, but the flower of all that fairest shows,
The flower that love befriends and passion knows,
Outblossoms their bloom, my sweet and winning rose !

3.

Why then, ye fields, aglow with laughter stand?
My maid is brighter than the brightest band
Of sweetly scented flowers that crown the land !

(144 Erot.)

A LIGHT.

WHAT? art seeking to kindle a light in the dark,
Striving to set thy goodly taper afire?
Come, reach hither thy lamp, and catch but a spark
Out of my heart that burns with a blaze of desire.
(15 Epid.)

PRISONER.

My lady plucked a single golden hair
And wound it captive-wise about my wrist:
I laughed aloud, and lightly thought to tear
Sweet Doris' bonds asunder when I list.
But failing strength to break them, then I cried
As one begripped with adamantine chains.
Now bounden by a hair, alas! I bide,
And follow as the fetter leads and strains.
(230 Erot.)

A KISS.

I KISSED a maiden overnight,—
Her dewy lips on mine,—
Her kiss a draught for gods' delight,
Her breath a drink divine.
That kiss hath made me drunken quite
With quaffing love's strong wine.
(305 Erot.)

KISSING.

SWEET are her kisses, if they faintly brush,
Sweet if they touch with half-withholden lips.
Her kisses are not faint, but strain and crush,
And draw the soul out from the finger-tips.
(14 Erot.)

AT THE MEETING OF THE LIPS.

I HELD my soul upon my lips
In that long kiss divine :
It came, poor thing, in hope to pass
And blend with thine !
(78 Erot.)

A KISS UPON THE CUP.

I AM no bibber : yet, wouldst have me drink ?

Taste ere thou givest, and I cannot miss.

Sweet handmaid ! when thy lips have touched the
brink,

I can no more refrain or fail or shrink :

That cup is crossing-ferry for thy kiss,

And brings me tidings of a proven bliss.

(261 Erot.)

DREAM OR WAKING.

My love at evening—then the mind is sound—

In deed or dream I know not, greeted me :

And all the scene, speech made and answer found,

Stands clearly shapen in my memory :

Yet is her kiss unproven ; if 'twere given,

How am I still on earth, who was in heaven ?

(177 M. P.)

DELIGHT.

SWEET unto lips athirst is snow to drink
In summer's heat :
Sweet unto mariners, when the stormwinds sink,
Spring flowers to greet :
Sweetest of all, when two fond lovers cling
Beneath one bower,
While for deep gladness both together sing
Love's praise and power.

(169 Erot.)

MOONLIGHT.

NIGHT-WANDERING lover of the night-long rite,
Shine through the shapely casement bars, O moon :
Shed on my lady's golden form thy light,
For heavenly eyes may read our lovers' rune.
As thine own heart once felt Endymion's might,
So falls upon my love and me thy boon.

(123 Erot.)

JEALOUSY.

SLEEPEST thou, sweet? would I were wingless sleep,
To come and slumber on thine eyes alone !
Sleep lulls the very gods : but I would keep
Even sleep away and have thee all mine own.
(174 Erot.)

OVER THE SEA.

SOVEREIGN of stormbeat coasts ! this scanty tale
Of gifts I offer from my little store :
For o'er wide waves to-morrow with the gale
I speed to clasp again my paramour.
Shine fair upon my passion and my sail,
Queen of the bridal-chamber and the shore !
(17 Erot.)

LOVE'S HARVEST.

I.

THEY gather grapes in season : and the tongue
Of him that culls the clusters richly hung
Revileth not the tendrils thereamong.

2.

But thee, O lady mine, O rosy-fair,
The lifted offering of my lover's care,
I wreath in tender bonds, and hold thee there !

3.

This is my time for love's ingathering :
I bide no other summer and no spring :
For thou art ripe with every lovely thing.

4.

Long thus may youth and beauty with thee dwell !
Or would some twining wrinkle break thy spell,
It shall not matter,—for I love thee well.

(227 Erot.)

FAREWELL.

1.

THE last farewell is on my tongue,
But fierce I draw the rein :
The word recoils as backward flung,—
And I remain.

2.

For bitter as the stream of death
In everlasting night
Is that fell hour that sundereth
Me from thy sight.

3.

The light of thee is like the day,
Yet daylight is but dumb,
But when thou comest in the way,
Sweet voices come :—

4.

Tones sweeter than the Sirens' song
That on the waters rang ;
And there with all its hopes in throng
My heart doth hang.

(241 Erot.)

ABANDONED.

"TO-MORROW I shall see thee"—O forever thus
denied!

For daily comes renewal of the daily new delay.
This is my cold requital, while to loves on every
side

Thou gift on gift dost render and thy troth to me
betray.

"In the evening I shall see thee"—but a woman's
eventide

Is when her cheek is furrowed deep and life has
passed away.

(233 Erot.)

REMEDIES.

LOVE is slain by fasting, or if fasting fail
Time will avail.

Spite of time and fasting, if unquenched the flame
Burn still the same,

Then try loving-kindness: this shall be a noose
No power can loose.

(497 Epid.)

BROKEN VOWS.

O HOLY Night, and Lamp that burnest dim !
Ye only heard the plighted troth we made.
He swore to love me, I to cherish him
Forever, and your witness-seal we prayed.
O Lamp, his vows adown far waters swim,
And on another's breast thou seest him laid.
(8 Erot.)

REGRETS.

FILL up the cup and pledge my love again,
And blend again her sweet name with the wine.
Let now the crown of flowers, whose scented rain
Brings her remembrance, on my brows recline.
Behold ! the lovelorn rose doth weep amain
To see my love in other arms than mine.
(136 Erot.)

NO REST.

O TEARS ! O revels ! wherefore plunge again
My feet in flames, ere yet they quit the fire
I cease not loving, though determined pain
Come with each undetermined fresh desire.
(211 Erot.)

GUILTY EYES.

LOVE's wine for ever drinking, O mine eyes ?
And quaffing purest beauty without cease ?
Come, fly, as strength betides us, and devise
A wineless offering unto love in peace.
Or there if still the maddening passion sting,
Ye shall be drenched with tears of chilly rain,
And suffer as ye sinned, remembering
Your deed hath brought me to this fire of pain.
(226 Erot.)

A CRY FOR REST.

THE noise of passion ringing in mine ears,
Mine eyes with tears of sweet desire made blind,
I rest not day nor night while fancy rears
My love's familiar form before my mind.
O winged desires, that fall upon your prey
Resistless, wherefore lacks the strength to wing away?
(212 Erot.)

DESPAIR.

O LOVE, beseech you ! heed my suppliant song,
And send my sleepless passion some redress.
On me alone thine arrows made to throng
Pour all thy feathered shafts with all their stress :
Yet if I die, my verse shall shout thy wrong—
“Stranger, behold thou Love's blood-guiltiness.”
(215 Erot.)

WILD OATS.

I.

I HAVE loved and run riot like all the world—
Who knows not riot and love ?
Thro' my heart the storms of passion have whirled,
The frenzy from heaven above.

2.

Now away with it all ! for the hoar-white hair
Is thrusting the sable away,
And a message is come and a sign to declare
'Tis time to be sober to-day.

3.

I have had my season of frolic in youth,
And now that the season is past,
'Tis time to bethink me of wisdom forsooth,
'Tis time for reforming at last.

(112 Erot.)

BAD NIGHT.

ILL sleep befall thee, like the cold repose
Here in the dark I take beside thy door,
Sleep like the sleep to thee thy lover owes,
O heart that mercy never stood before !
More ruthless than the ruth a friend bestows,
Thou shalt repent thee when thy hair is hoar.
(23 Erot.)

TOO LATE.

Now dost thou greet me, when thy witch's face—
Once fairer than white marble—fades forlorn ?
Now toyst, when thy head hath lost its grace—
The locks that tossed upon thy neck in scorn ?
Away, fond fool ! and come not nigh my place :
Failing the rose, I will not have the thorn !
(28 Erot.)

THE LAST PAIN.

HURL from high crags, or plunge in roaring tide,
Smite me with frost or fire or thunderstone :
When crushed by love the heart hath swooned and
died,
In vain the very bolts of Zeus are thrown.
(168 Erot.)

THE SONG OF SAPPHO.

PEER of the gods I deem the man
Who, face to face before thee set,
Hears thy sweet speech, with nought to let,
Thy sweet love-laughter.

When thou dost laugh, within my breast
My quaking heart shakes wild with storm ;
One glance on thee and voice can form
No speech thereafter.

My broken tongue asunder falls,
Light woven fires leap through my limbs,
Mine eyesight blind in darkness swims,
Mine ears are tingling ;

Cold stream the dewdrops ; through me smites
Fierce trembling ; pale as lily-leaves
I swoon, nor life nor death reprieves—
Both wildly mingling.

SAPPHO'S PRAYER.

O MAGIC-MINDED, deathless Queen,
Daughter of Zeus, who weavest wile,
Spare thou mine aching heart awhile,
Sovran, from sadness.

Nay, come, as once, with listening ear
Heeding my lifted voice of old,
Thou from thy father's home of gold
Camest with gladness.

Thy car was yoked with comely doves,
That drew thee round the clouded world,
While fast their beating pinions whirled
Through mid-sky falling.

Swift lighting thou, O Holy One,
With laughter in thy deathless eyes,
Didst ask, "What aileth in this wise?
Why art thou calling?"

“What doth thy wild heart most desire ?
Whom loveward dost thou long to lead ?
Who, Sappho, doth requite thy meed
With scorn and wronging ?

“Know, one that flees shall follow thee,
One taking not thy gift shall give,
One loving not, for love shall live,
Though loth her longing.”

O come, then ; loosen and make lighter
The cares that chain me ; grant my vow
Heart-wished achievement, and be thou
My fellow-fighter !

II.

SONGS OF THE LOVE OF
NATURE.



THE POET IN SPRING.

Now stormy winter from the world is gone ;
The purple hours of blossom-laden spring
Smile, and dim earth with herb is crowned upon,
And budding boughs abroad their tresses fling.
Fair meadows, where the rosebud opens ripe,
Laugh, drinking tender dew of kindly dawn ;
The shepherd on the mountains shrills his pipe,
Rejoicing, as he tends on kid or fawn ;
And o'er the wide waves mariners fare with sails
Well spread and hollowed well by undespiteful gales.

Now to the cluster-laden god of wine
Glad clamours rise from swains, upon whose locks
Rich blooms of many-berried ivy twine ;
Now bees, whose birth is from the mouldering ox—
So saith the legend—'neath their straw-built dome
Ply cunning handiwork, and shape amain

Their waxen glory of fresh-molten comb ;

Now all the bird-clans lift a clear-voiced strain,—
At sea the halcyon, swallows round the eaves,
Swans by the brookside, nightingales amid the
leaves.

So when the boughs rejoice, and earth is bright
With blossoms ; when the shepherd for delight
Pipes, and the flocks make merry all day long ;
When sails are spreading, when the wine-god's
song
Sounds for the dance ; when every wingèd thing
Makes music, and the bees in travail cling ;—
How should a singer sing not sweetly in the spring ?
(363 Epid.)

TO A BEE.

O FEEDER on sweet flowers ! how dost thou dare
To touch the body of my lady fair,
Abandoning the petals of the spring ?

Wouldst thou declare she beareth in her heart
The bitter, sweet, intolerable smart
Love left there when he planted home his
sting?

Dear friend of lovers, get thee gone again :
This is thy message, but it comes in vain :
We know of old the tidings thou dost bring.
(163 Erot.)

A SEAMEW.

BELOVED of all the Graces all thy days,
Whose voice was like the halcyon's for delight,
Thou diest ; spirit sweet and winning ways
Are lost amid the voiceless paths of night.
(199 Epit.)

A BALM-CRICKET.

No more upcurled beneath some leafy branch
I gladden at the song my pinions shower ;
On me a child his evil hand did launch
And crushed me in the petals of my flower.
(200 Epit.)

THE CICALA.

LOUD-TONGUED cicala, drunken deep with drops of
morning dew,
Who warblest in the wilderness thy lonely wood-
land strain,
Perching thy jagged limbs upon some flower that
blossoms new,
Sun-sabled singer, sounding loud thy musical
refrain !
O touch some unfamiliar note for forest-fairies' boon,
And ring aloud thy song to echo piping Pan again.
So shall I shun the hunter Love, and snare a sleep at
noon,
Laying my limbs to dream awhile beneath this
shady plane.
(196 Epit.)

TO A GNAT.

FLY swiftly, fly, and gently brush her ear,
And murmur low the message that I send :
“O careless of thy lovers ! sleepest here?
He waits thee sleepless.” Wend, O singer, wend,
And speak thou softly, lest her lord be near,
And come with jealous wrath on me to spend.
Bring her ; a lion’s hide shall dress thee, dear,
And for thy hand a cudgel will I lend !
(152 Erot.)

CICALA AND SPIDER.

A WEE cicala meshed in woven thread,
Beneath a spider’s tightened claws did quake.
I heard the child of song in evil stead
Cry from the slender chains he fain would break :
So did I loose him from the snare, and said—
“I save thee for thy fairy music’s sake.”
(372 Epid.)

A CICALA'S REMONSTRANCE.

WHY from the dewy boughs, thou shepherd loon,
Wilt tear me?—me who love far forest dens,
A wayside nightingale who sings at noon
A golden song 'mid rocks and shady glens.
Blackbird and thrush and clouds of starlings shoot
Devouring bills upon your wealth of sheaves ;
Seize them, and slay the stealers of your fruit :—
What harm in taking tender dew and leaves ?
(373 Epid.)

TO A BALM-CRICKET.

SOOTHER of sleep, beguiler of love's pain,
Queen-singer in the field of all that sings,
Thou harp of nature ! strike some lovely strain,
Touching with tender feet thy tuneful wings.
O save me from my sorrow's sleeplessness ;
Weave webs of song to lead my love astray ;
At dawn thy guerdon shall be sweetest cress,
And on thy lips dew showered in cloven spray !
(195 Epit.)

ON A BALM-CRICKET.

WITHIN the palace walls thy shrill sweet tone
No more shall sound, nor sun upon thee shine.
To Clymenus' far meadows art thou flown,
And dewy flowers of golden Proserpine.
(189 Epit.)

ON A BALM-CRICKET.

No more among the furrows and the sheaves
With merry tuneful pinion shalt thou sing ;
Nor gladden me, beneath my bower of leaves,
With music beaten from thy golden wing.
(192 Epit.)

A DOLPHIN'S DEATH.

UPON the shore by stormy billows thrust,
I lay for strangers to behold and moan.
For on the land is pity : they were just
Who found and crowned and gave me burial stone.
My mother sea hath slain me : put no trust
Henceforth in her who spareth not her own.
(216 Epit.)

A STRANDED DOLPHIN.

No more to plunge through depths of bubbling sea,
Startling the finny shoals that downward float,
Nor gambol to the reed-pipe's melody,
Breaking the billows round the fisher's boat !
Child of the foam ! fair mermaids clinging close
Shall cross on thee to ocean's end no more :
Huge, as the Southern Cape a wave arose,
And hurled thee high upon the sandy shore.
(214 Epit.)

TO A BLACKBIRD.

WARBLE no more, O blackbird, on the oak,
Perching and singing 'mid the topmost leaves.
Haste from thy foe with speedy pinion-stroke,
Fly, where the vine its bower of shadow weaves.
There rest thy wing, and let thy music flow
In shrilly numbers, free from fear of wrong.
There, 'stead of bird-bewraving mistletoe,
Grapes cluster :—and the god of wine loves song.
(87 Epid.)

IN THE STRAITS.

SEA-STRAIT of changing billows backward rolled !
Whose wandering waters toss with warring tides,
Whose destined tale thrice day and night is told,
Whose borrowed floods a vessel scarce abides !
I marvel at thy wonders thousand-fold,
The mystic spell that searchless nature hides.
(73 Epid.)

THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS OF THE
EPHESIANS.

THE chariot-ridden walls of Babylon,
Mausolus' shrine, the Zeus of Pelops' isle,
The Hanging Gardens, Statue of the Sun,
The towering Pyramids' stupendous pile,—
These have I seen ; but when before mine eyes
Arose the cloud-capped fane of Artemis,
All were bedimmed and vanished : 'neath the skies
Never the sun beheld a work like this.

(58 Epid.)

THE GREAT LIGHTHOUSE AT
ALEXANDRIA.

A TOWER of help for mariners on the main,
Flashing my safety-beacon through the night,
I tottered in the thundering hurricane,
Until Ammonius' toil renewed my might.
The wild waves past, to him, upon the land,
As to the Great Earthshaker, sailors lift the hand.

(674 Epid.)

PAN PIPING :

A SONG OF PLATO.

BE still, ye wooded cliffs and waterfalls
And mingled bleatings from the murmuring meads !
For Pan with sweetly ringing music calls,
Laying his lip on pipe of bounden reeds :
And round him, dancing swift with glimmering feet,
Nymphs of the forest and the fountain meet.
(823 Epid.)

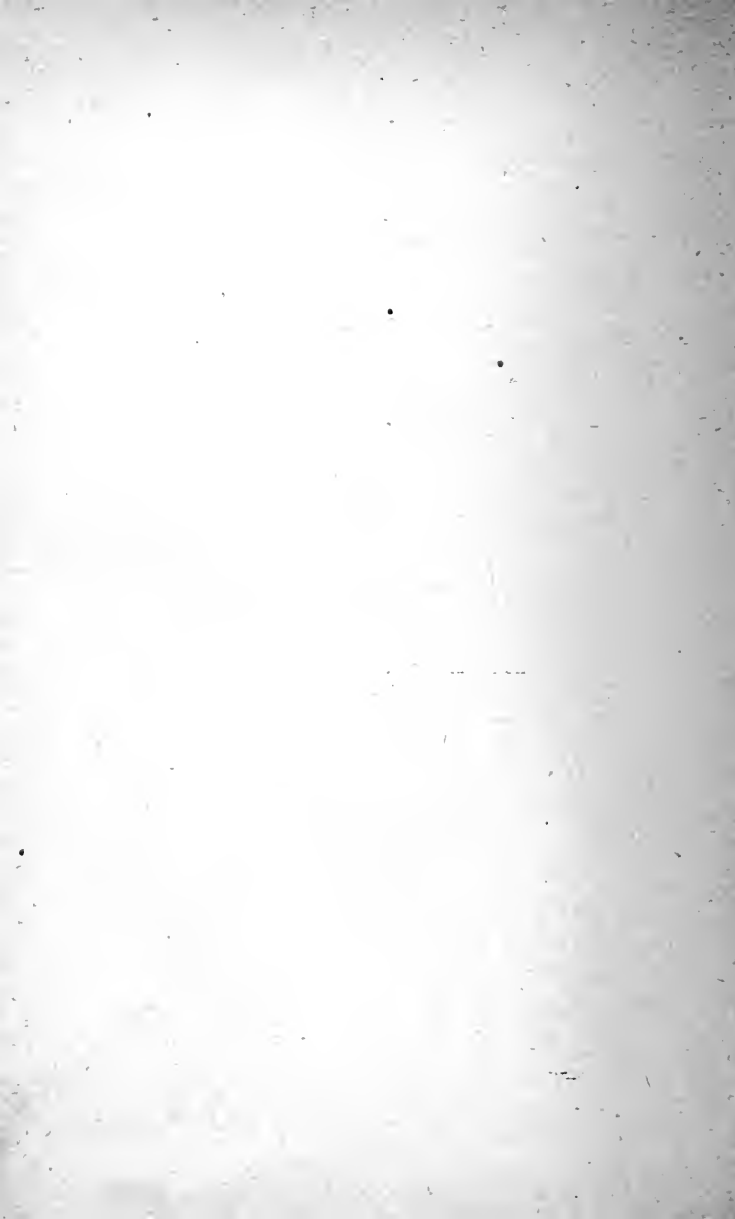
THE ASTRONOMER'S VISION :

A SONG OF PTOLEMY.

I KNOW that death must end my little day :
Yet when mine eyes the mazy heavens do scan
Wherein the stars revolving wind their way,
My feet are lifted from the earth they trod ;
I rise, and rest beyond the realm of man,
Filled with the everlasting food of God.
(577 Epid.)



III.
SONGS OF DEATH.



HOMER.

HERALD of heroes, priest of highest heaven,
The sun that on the world of Hellas shone,
The light of song, the ageless tongue of time,
Here lies in dust beside the rolling sea.

(6 Epit.)

ORPHEUS.

No more with rocks and trees shalt thou prevail,
Or tameless beasts of prey draw after thee,
Nor hush the roar of clanging wind and hail
Or storm of snow or thunder of the sea.
O lost one ! how the Maids of Song lament,
And most thy mother, sad Calliope !
Yet wherefore mourn our sons? Can God relent,
Or grant deliverance from the death to be?

(8 Epit.)

ARCHILOCHUS COMES.

A WARNING TO CERBERUS.

UP now, and watch thy mighty dungeon gate
With sleepless eyes, thou warder hound of hell !
Lycambes' daughters fled from life's estate,
To 'scape the bard's devouring, fiery spell :
The dead, then, trembling for his scathing hate,
Shall burst the bars of darkness where they dwell.
(70 Epit.)

HERACLEITUS.

SOME one chancing to tell, Heracleitus, the tale of thy
death,
Moved me to tears, for I thought how many times
we twain
Talked the sun down together. But now thou some-
where apart
Liest, O strangeland friend, thrice this long time in
dust.
Yet thy nightingale songs are alive, nor ever shall
death,
Death, who plunders the world, lay upon them his
hand.
(80 Epit.)

HERACLEITUS IN DEATH.

WHY, dullards, drag to death a sage, whose lore
Is not for you but them that know my spell?
One man ten thousand, and ten thousand score
I count as nought—I say it even in hell.
(128. Epit.)

SOPHOCLES.

LIGHTLY, lightly climb, O ivy, o'er the tomb of
Sophocles,
Lightly let thy dewy tresses stream before it to the
ground ;
Round about let roses blossom, and the cluster-laden
trees
Shed abroad their wavy tendrils, circling like a
flood around,
For the wonder-hearted wisdom of his honeyed
melodies,
Which the Muses and the Graces with their mingled
bounties crowned.
(22 Epit.)

EURIPIDES.

THE rich flesh of thy form,
Enwrapped in fire and storm,
Vanished in burning mist beneath the sky :
This tomb of many moans
Holds nought now save thy bones,
And sorrow for the pilgrim passing by.
(48 Epit.)

ANACREON.

LET fourfold-clustered ivy bloom, Anacreon, o'er thy
head,
And all the dainty flowers that in the purple
meadows throng ;
Let snowy milk in fountains from the choking soil be
shed,
And from the earth leap scented wine in rivers
sweet and strong.
So shall thy bones and ashes win delight among the
dead,
If any touch of gladness to the perished pass along,
O lover of the lovely lyre, who, as thy sweet will
sped,
Hast sailed through all the seas of life with passion
and with song !
(23 Epit.)

ANACREON.

ASLEEP in death thou liest, and thy goodly work is
o'er ;

Asleep is all the sweetness of thy moonlight sound-
ing lyre ;

Asleep the boy for whom thy god-like wine of song
did pour,

Thy Smerdis, thy beloved, and thy springtime of
desire.

For Love, that loveth comely youths, he smote thee to
the core,

And all his arrows fell on thee and darts of crooked
fire.

(29 Epit.)

PLATO.

WERE Plato not of heaven, I fain would know,

How did his writing make man's spirit whole ?

His son Asclepius healed the body's woe ;

He was the great physician of the soul.

(108 Epit.)

CLEOMBROTUS' DEATH.

HE cried aloud, " O sunlight, fare thee well ! "
And from a lofty tower leapt down to hell :
No woe worth death he found, but read a scroll—
The book that Plato wrote about the soul.

(471 Epit.)

ERATOSTHENES.

No dark disease, but gently dealing age
Hath dimmed thee. Now, thy noble pondering
o'er,
The doom of slumber lulls thine eyes, O sage !
And though thou rest amid thy sires no more,
A strange land gives thee friendly heritage
Here by the margin of the sounding shore.

(78 Epit.)

DEMOCRITUS, THE LAUGHING
PHILOSOPHER.

THIS is the sage's laughter, when at the last he saith,
 "Truth unlaughing I spake, 'Time and life are a
 laugh,'
 Seeing for all my wisdom and host unnumbered of
 books,
 Under a tomb I lie, leaving nought but a laugh."
 (56 Epit.)

A PRAYER TO PERSEPHONE FOR
THE SOUL OF DEMOCRITUS.

QUEEN of the world of never-smiling dead !
 There comes a soul with laughter unto thee :
 Receive it kindly, as once laughter sped
 To soothe thy mourning mother's misery.
(58 Epit.)

THE POET'S TOMB.

TIME crumbles rocky cliffs and steel away :
Before his scythe all things soever wane.
Even thus Laërtes' tomb within the bay
Wastes and decays beneath the chilly rain ;
Yet is the hero's glory never gray,
While ages strive to dull his song in vain.
(225 Epit.)

THEMISTOCLES.

HELLAS, bestrewn with wrecks, for tomb I claim
To mark the foeman's ruin on the seas.
Here carve the battle and the great King's shame,
To deck the marble of Themistocles :
But Salamis stands the pillar of my fame,—
A fame too vast for narrow bounds like these !
(73 Epit.)

ERINNA.

THOUGH short her strain nor sung with mighty boast,
Yet there the power of song had dwelling-room ;
So lives her name for ever, nor lies lost
Beneath the shadow of the wings of gloom,
While bards of after days, in countless host,
Slumber and fade forgotten in the tomb.
Better the swan's brief note than thousand cries
Of rooks in springtime blown about the skies.
(713 Epit.)

LAIS.

Low now the bloom of love and beauty wanes,
Who held alone all lilies of delight,
Nor sees the sun shake out his golden reins,
But sleeps the destined slumber in the night,
Bidding farewell to wooer's jealous pains,
Caress and revel and the mystic light.
(219 Epit.)

LAIS.

LAIS, who, robed in gold and purple, played
With passion and in dainty dalliance shone,
Lies here, sea-girdled Corinth's lovely maid,
Fairer than all the founts of Helicon.
Her, like a goddess, princely wooers sought—
Yea, more than ever thronged to Helen's bowers,—
Plucking the bloom of love for money bought :
And still her tomb doth breathe of scented flowers,
Her mouldering bones are fresh with frankincense,
Her tender locks smell sweet with spikenard,
Desire doth mourn refusing condolence,
And Love's sad queen her comely face hath marred.
Had Lais not for silver thrall'd her charms,
All Hellas, as for Helen, would have clashed in arms.
(218 Epit.)

THE BRIDE OF DEATH.

I.

Ah, luckless maiden ! in thy fairest prime,
Just as life's dial pointed marriage-time;—
Who sang thy wedlock chime ?

2.

No Hymenaeus decked thy chamber door,
No lamps of Heré flashed thy feet before,
But sleep, that wakes no more,

3.

Fell, and there came an awful voice of doom,
That day the lights were kindled in thy room,—
Thy chamber and thy tomb !

(188 Epit.)

CLEARISTA'S DEATH.

THE spouse she found was death, who came before
And took her ere she loosed her maiden-zone.
The flutes at even sounded round her door,
Her chamber rang with songs of merry tone ;
But with the morn rose lamentation sore,
The minstrel's voice was changed to wailful moan :
The lamps, that flashed along the bridal floor,
Now light her spirit down the gloom alone.
(182 Epit.)

A LOST MOTHER.

WHY linger idly mourning at my tomb ?
In death I find not aught for misery.
Cease then, my husband, cease to wail my doom :
Farewell, my children : and remember me.
(667 Epit.)

A HAPPY DEATH.

MOURN not, O traveller, for my vanished life.

In very death I find no misery.

My children's children live : I loved one wife,

Mine age's helpmeet. Sons I married three,
And ofttimes rocked their children on my breast,
But ne'er saw death or ailment fall on one.

Now have they lulled me to a peaceful rest

Among the blessed ones whose day is done.

(260 Epit.)

A CENTENARIAN.

OF children nine and twenty that I bore,

Nor son nor daughter but remains alive :

No staff mine aged hand hath trembled o'er :

I ended well my fivescore years and five.

(224 Epit.)

PLATTHIS THE WEAVER.

FULL oft at eve and morning did she spoil
Her sleep, while penury at bay she held,
To wheel and distaff, sharers of her toil,
Singing—beside the gates of hoary eld ;
Whirling the loom till dawn unwearily,
As o'er Athené's course with skill she sped,
Or, laying withered hand on withered knee,
Twined for the wheel the rightful meed of thread.
At fourscore years she saw the flood of doom,—
Platthis, who fairly wove fair raiment at the loom.
(726 Epit.)

A CHILD DROWNED.

AT play beside a well, a little child
Reached arms to catch his shadow in the deep :
His mother plucked him forth in sorrow wild,
Looking if still a breath of life he keep.
He sleeps—and leaves the waters undefiled—
Sleeps on his mother's knee the dreamless sleep.
(170 Epit.)

A SHEPHERD'S DEATH.

No more beneath the shadow of yon pine
The tuneful music of thy pipe shall flow,
Nor under spreading oak thy limbs recline
While listening cattle drink thy notes below :
A bolt from heaven hath slain thee, and thy kine
Came home belated through the driving snow.
(174 Epit.)

THE SAME.

Down from the hills unbidden the oxen came to the
fold,
Came in a grievous plight covered with flakes of
snow.
Woe's me ! under an oak Therimachus, fallen asleep,
Taketh his last long rest, sent by a flash from
heaven.
(173 Epit.)

ON A MERCHANT WHO DIED IN EGYPT.

HIS traffic ended, plough in hand, he died
And found a tomb at Memphis, far from home.
Then rose the Nile, whose mighty rushing tide
Swept all away his little shroud of loam.
So lies he, sunk and shipwrecked, though he plied
Scathless in life across the bitter foam.

(76 Epit.)

LOST IN EGYPT.

EUPOLIS' daughter, born in Samos isle,
Who closed in travail-pangs her twenty years,
Here in the barren sands beside the Nile
Lies lost with her twin babes from all her peers.
O maidens! bring ye gifts, and weep awhile,
Shedding on her cold tomb your burning tears.

(166 Epit.)

A MOTHER WEeping FOR HER CHILD.

THIS was the wail a mother at the tomb
Raised for her child of twelve, mourning his doom :
“ Lost are my travail-pains in pain and fire,
Lost all the grievous toiling of thy sire,
Lost all thy sweet love : thou hast reached the shore
Without return or mercy evermore.
Thou camest not to youth : and now we own
Dumb ashes in thy stead, and this thy stone.”

(467 Epit.)

ERATO'S LAST WORDS.

CLASPING her father, with her latest breath,
Amid the dew of falling tears, she cries :—
“ O Father, I am gone : the mist of death
Folds dimly round the darkness of mine eyes.”

(646 Epit.)

A SPARTAN FATHER.

LIFELESS home upon his shield
Came the warrior from the field,—
Seven his wounds, and frontwards every one :
Calmly then his aged sire
Laid the corse upon the pyre,
Speaking words of high desire,—
“Tears for a craven’s death, not thine, my son !
Tearless I will bury thee,
Child of Sparta and of me.
Well done ! well done !”
(229 Epit.)

A SPARTAN MOTHER.

WHEN the mother saw her son
Trembling from the battle run,
All his glory lost and knightly fame :
Swift a blood-stained spear she spied,
Seized and plunged it through his side,
Speaking words of lofty pride,—
“Die, and let not Sparta bear thy blame.
Hers is not the sin and scorn,
If my womb hath cowards borne.
O shame ! O shame !”
(230 Epit.)

A CHIEF'S DEATH.

ÆLIUS, daring of hand, the chieftain of Argos, who
twined

Wreaths of gold on his brow after the wars were
done,

Caught by a pining sickness and maimed, ran back-
ward in thought

Over his bygone life's warrior story of deeds ;
Then in his heart plunged deep his blade, saying only
a word—

“Men find death by the sword, cowards by slow
disease.”

(234 Epit.)

A POOR FISHERMAN.

By cunning creels he gat his daily prize,

Wont like a merlin o'er the waves to leap,

Netting the crannied rocks in fisher's guise,

Scorning the stately galley's long-oared sweep.

His fourscore years did break not suddenwise,

By stormy star or hurricane from the steep ;

But in his reed-hut, as a taper dies,

After his many days he fell asleep.

This tomb nor child nor goodwife bade arise,

But faithful fellow-craftsmen of the deep.

(295 Epit.)

A SAILOR'S TOMB.

FAIR winds befall the mariner on his ways !
But if his barque, as mine, some storm bewrays,
And drives him to the harbour-home of doom,
He shall not chide the waves as merciless ;
Nought is to blame save his foolhardiness,
Who dared to loose his moorings from my tomb.
(264 Epit.)

FEAR AFTER DEATH.

WHY set ye here a shipwrecked sailor's grave?
Far should my mound be, not beside the sea.
I shudder at the deadly roaring wave :
Yet—fair befall ye, all who pity me.
(267 Epit.)

A MORAL.

OFT in life I sang the strain,
Now from death I cry aloud :—
“ Drink ye, comrades, drink again,
Ere the dust shall wind your shroud.”
(32 Epit.)

IV.

SONGS OF HEREAFTER.



LIFE.

ALL the world's a stage, a show :

Then learn thy part

With all thy heart,

Or bear the burden of thy woe.

(72 Protrep.)

COURAGE.

SUFFER, in lion-souled long-sufferings,

Unsufferable things :

No man on earth doth wrong but shall atone,

And reap as he hath sown.

(527 Epid.)

CARE.

IF caring profits, then for care take thought ;

But if God cares for thee, what need to care ?

Thoughtful or thoughtless art thou, as God wrought ;

And if thou carest, God's care worketh there.

(34 Protrep.)

SIN.

THE sin thou art about
May peradventure 'scape the eye of man :
Yet God shall find thee out
For all thy pondered plan.
(27 Protrep.)

GOODNESS.

WHEN ocean-waves of wealth around thee roll,
Be calm amid their noise :
Nor warp thro' care the freedom of thy soul.
Life's barque is ever battered by the shocks
Of storm-winds, lacking poise,
And drives from side to side and wildly rocks.
But righteousness stands fast amid the strife :
Nought else there is that buoys
The soul in safety through the seas of life.
(74 Protrep.)

WISDOM.

Not life is sweet, but casting from the breast
All hoary-headed fantasies of dole.
Enough alone I covet : for the rest,
The boundless craze of gold devours the soul.
So in the world full often shalt thou find
Better is death than life and want than wealth :
Wherefore make straight the pathways of thy mind,
Looking to wisdom as thine only health.
(76 Protrep.)

QUESTIONS.

How was I born ? whence am I ? wherefore come ?
What ! only to depart ?
How can I learn ? for knowledge all is dumb.
I shall be as I was before my birth :
From nought my life did start :
Nought is the race of man and nothing-worth.
Then from the beaker be the wine-flood hurled :
This only cheers the heart,
And works against the venom of the world.
(118 Protrep.)

THE BREATH OF LIFE.

WE, through our nostrils breathing air refined,
Do live and look upon the lamp of day :
Yea, all who live are vessels for the wind,
Harps for the breath that giveth life to play.
The hand that chokes a little draught of air
Doth steal the soul and send it down to death :
So men are nought, yet on vainglory fare,
Feeding upon a slender gale of breath.
(75 Protrep.)

CHANCE.

OUR pitiful homeless life is the plaything of chance,
Spinning from riches to want as seemeth her well :
Some from the earth she tosses aloft to dance,
Some from the clouds of heaven she flingeth to hell.
(80 Protrep.)

DEATH.

I.

WHY fear ye death, the father of sweet peace,
Who brings release
From sickness and the pangs of penury?

2.

Once only to a mortal can he come ;
This is the sum :
Twice hath he ne'er been seen by mortal eye.

3.

But sickness cometh strange and manifold :
No time is told ;
And in a thousand shapes it passeth by.
(69 Protrep.)

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

LIFE is a perilous voyage : storms may overwhelm
And wreck us like poor mariners past avail :
Chance is the steersman standing at the helm,
And wind and wave beset us, as we sail.
Fair passage some, foul others doth befall ;
Yet death's one haven shall receive us all.
(65 Protrep.)

THE RUINS OF CORINTH.

WHERE is thy shining glory, Corinth ? where
Thine olden heirlooms and thy crown of towers
Thy temples, palaces, and ladies fair,
And tens of thousands thronging in thy bowers
O hapless ! not a trace remains of thee :
Thine all devouring warfare hath bereft :
Scathless we only, mermaids of the sea,
The halcyon singers of thy grief are left.
(151 Epid.)

MISERY.

How, save only by death, from thee, O life, can I flee?

Thousand evils are thine, grievous to bear or shun.

What though the beauties of earth be sweet, the land
and the sea,

Lovely the stars in heaven, lovely the moon and
sun,

All is fear and sorrow besides : or if good there be,

Balance and vengeance of ill maketh it all undone.

(123 Protrep.)

THE BURDEN OF TIME.

THE burden of grey time my heart doth rue.

Time passing steals the tones upon the tongue :
Viewless, time sweeps from view the men we view,
And brings to view the viewless thereamong.

O dateless limit of this earthly light,

As day by day men move to endless night !

(499 Epid.)

VANITY.

NAKED I reached the world at birth,
Naked I pass beneath the earth :
Why toil I, then, in vain distress,
Seeing the end is nakedness?
(58 Protrep.)

WEALTH.

ART wealthy?—And hereafter?—When thou goest,
Wilt sweep thy wealth within thy coffin-boards?
Thou spendest life to save the wealth thou showest :
Nor canst thou pile thy years with added hoards.
(60 Protrep.)

RESIGNATION.

WHY toil in vain, O man, and vex thy state,
Slave of the fortune falling at thy birth?
Resign thyself, nor fight against God's fate :
Be calm, and take in peace thy lot on earth.
Else force thy doom to gladness, and create,
If may be, for thyself undestined mirth.
(77 Protrep.)

DESPAIR.

WITH soul all sinless came I from my sires,
Yet move I to destruction through my birth.
O deathful wedlock, doom of whose desires
Doth sweep me down to death beneath the earth !
From nought my being is, to nought retires,
Nought is the life of man and nothing-worth.
Then fill me high the flashing cup, whose fires
Perchance may turn my mourning into mirth.
(339 Epit.)

TEARS OF LIFE.

BORN with shedding of tears, with falling of tears I
die ;
Life I have found in tears all the length of my day.
O for the tearful, powerless, pitiful race of man,
Stormwise over the earth whirling and passing
away !
(84 Protrep.)

HOPE AND DEATH.

HOPE ever steals our life ; but at the last
There comes a morn when trouble all is past.
(8 Epid.)

LAMENT.

WELLAWAY ! ah wellaway !
Goodly youth and foul decay,
Age that neareth,
Youth that veereth,
Veereth passing far away !
(118 Epid.)

THE LAST VOYAGE.

FATHER, who ever, at mine often prayer,
Didst grant me sign of stormless voyage fair,
Grant now one voyage more, and safely keep
To that last haven where all sorrows sleep.
Country and home are sweet: but overstress
Of trouble is not life, but weariness.

(9 Epid.)

AFTER ME.

Now I am dead, be earth devoured of hell:
I reck it not: with me the world is well.

(704 Epit.)





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